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Wilson's NOBTS career spans five decades

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — The Broad Street bus made the same sweeping turn — around from Old Gentilly Boulevard onto Gentilly Boulevard, performing its typical, daily routine. A young woman, in a freshly starched white dress, stared intently out the bus window, nervously waiting for the bus to come to a complete stop.

Nestled among the hundreds of pecan trees were new buildings, construction trucks, men wearing hard hats, and lots of activity out in this rural part of Orleans Parish known as Eastern New Orleans.

On that beautiful, spring New Orleans morning, Almetta Wilson began a career that has lasted 40 years, touching the lives of students who would serve in Southern Baptist agencies, churches and mission fields around the world.

"Ms. Almetta," as she is lovingly called by everyone on the campus of New Orleans Seminary, has been an icon of affection, stability, love, laughter, and smiles for over four decades. In fact, her tenure at the seminary is half the number of years the seminary itself has existed.

Almetta's loyalty, hard work, and love for the institution she has called home for so many years are trademarks of a woman whose roots began on a cotton farm in Tylertown. Back then, she was in bed by 6:30 each evening and up at 4:40 every morning to milk four or five cows before going to pick a field of cotton.

Those long days on the farm set the standards for hard work

that have sustained her for a lifetime.

Having moved to New Orleans a few years before that spring day in 1959, Almetta was told of an opening at NOBTS by a woman who was working for the seminary. While Almetta was cutting a woman's hair one day, she learned that O.J. Farnsworth, the man who built most of the buildings at NOBTS, needed a maid.

Almetta applied, got the job and a few days later came to work at the seminary.

Recalling those early days brings a bright smile to Almetta's face; but behind her glasses, her eyes become soft and misty. She laughs again and forces the tears to retreat.

"The Lord has blessed me through sickness and health. Through good times and bad times, the seminary family stuck together and the Lord brought us through," she said.

Her faith in God is apparent as she is quick to tell anyone about the difference Christ makes in her life and about how his strength is what sustains her each day.

She vividly remembers her baptism in the McGee River at the age of 12, but it was an incident a few years earlier that got her thinking about the Lord.

In the third grade, in order to get the children's attention, her Sunday School teacher told them there was a real devil, with a tail, that would come and "joog" people with a pitchfork if they were bad. That night, she had a horrible nightmare about it and awakened

the whole house with her cries. Her mother, upon learning about the reason for the nightmare, gave Almetta some sound advice — to pray.

Almetta has been praying faithfully since that day. Not long ago Almetta found herself praying following a sad day on campus, when despite her efforts, she could not hold back her tears.

Her sadness came after seeing yet another moving truck and another close friend leave the seminary campus. "Lord, why do my friends have to move away?" she found herself praying.

Then, with a gentle voice, Almetta said, the Lord explained: *These people are shepherds over my flocks. They have to leave to teach someone else and shepherd flocks in another place.*

From that moment on, she became keenly aware of the calling on her friends' lives and why many were serving with four seminary presidents. "Ms. Almetta" is shown (clockwise) with her supervisor, Becky Brown, director of housing; at a New Orleans city council meeting where she was honored upon her retirement; in the cafeteria in the early 1980s; and there for only a short time and

TOUCHING LIVES — During 40 years Almetta Wilson has worked in every NOBTS building and served with four seminary presidents. "Ms. Almetta" is shown (clockwise) with her supervisor, Becky Brown, director of housing; at a New Orleans city council meeting where she was honored upon her retirement; in the cafeteria in the early 1980s; and there for only a short time and

(BP photo courtesy of NOBTS public relations office)

40 years of service
Ms. Almetta Wilson



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B&H books listed as finalists

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Four books published by Broadman & Holman (B&H) Publishers of LifeWay Christian Resources have been selected as finalists in the 1999 Gold Medallion Awards Competition sponsored by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

Categories range from Bibles to reference works to fiction and Christian living. Five titles are nominated within each category. B&H books comprise three of the five nominees in the devotional category. Books are judged on content, literary quality, design and significance of the contribution.

B&H books selected as finalists in the devotional category are "Until He Comes: Daily Inspiration for Those Who Await the Savior" by Calvin Miller; "Every Day Light: Water for the Soul" by Selwyn Hughes; and "The One Minute Bible: Men of Character" by Lawrence Kimbrough.

"What Would Jesus Do Today?" by Brian Shipman, meanwhile, is a finalist in the youth category.

The winners in the 22nd annual competition will be announced July 10 during the Christian Booksellers Association's annual convention in Orlando, Fla.

Looking back

10 years ago

Centrists tout a get-out-the-vote campaign for Daniel Vestal, candidate for president at the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas, during the "Here We Stand" symposium in Nashville. The meeting was sponsored by Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention.

20 years ago

Charles Hull, deacon at First Church, Winona, flies his single-engine Cessna 210 around the world. The three month, 39,000-mile trip was for three purposes — to visit missionaries, learn more about missions, and experience the adventure of flying around the world alone, he says.

50 years ago

Kilmichael pastor John A. Wade is awarded the Carnegie silver medal for rescuing a one-armed farmer from a well cave-in. Wade spent two hours in the well, clearing debris that landed on Simon Dismukes after he fell some 40 feet into the well. Wade eventually pulled the man to safety.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Perkins Jr.**

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Time to step up and obey — again

This is the greatest outpouring of concern I have seen in my 33 years in the Mississippi Brotherhood Department. It reflects the heart Mississippi Baptists have always had for missions and outreach. It would be difficult to overestimate the opportunities for witnessing on behalf of our Savior that will grow from this response.

— Paul Harrell, director
Miss. Brotherhood Department
Dec. 3, 1998

A few things have changed since Harrell made that statement regarding the nearly one million pounds of food and \$314,000 in cash donations that Mississippi Baptists helped to provide for the masses of Hondurans starving after Hurricane Mitch ravaged Central America.

Harrell retired from the Brotherhood Department shortly after that disaster relief effort, but promptly returned to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board as coordinator of the partnership missions office — now a full-time department with Harrell serving as director.

Jim Didlake, longtime consultant in the Brotherhood Department, now heads the renamed Men's Ministry Department.

One thing hasn't changed, however — "the heart Mississippi Baptists have always had for missions and outreach."

Indeed, it continues to be difficult to overestimate the opportunities in Honduras to witness on behalf of our Savior. Because of our long trail of successful ministry in Honduras, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board has requested that we enter into a special two-year partnership with Honduran Baptists.

From time to time, I hear such statements as: "Our church doesn't need the association; we do our own ministry. Only certain-size churches need the association. There's really no need for associations in the 21st century."

Such statements indicate little or no knowledge of the New Testament theological basis for associations, and a limited understanding of both our Southern Baptist heritage and the tasks of associations.

The theology of the New Testament provides a sound biblical basis for the association in Kingdom work. The association is the oldest of denominational entities in Baptist life and a major part of our Southern Baptist partnership — both a product of missions and a developer of missions.

The constitution of Prentiss Association states:

The purpose of this association shall be to promote Christian fellowship and cooperation among churches affiliated with the association; to hold the doctrines and principles of our Baptist faith and encourage the churches to be loyal and practice these doctrines and principles; to promote benevolence, stewardship, Christian education, the preaching and teaching of God's Word and the winning of all people to Christ to the ends of the earth; to cooperate with the Mississippi Baptist



FEEDING THE HUNGRY — Honduran children play in one of the grass-hut shanty towns that sprung up after the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Mississippi Baptists are once again kicking off a food relief drive to help prevent starvation among the destitute populace. (BR special photo)

Didlake reports that as a direct result of last year's massive hurricane response in which Mississippi Baptists played such an integral role, 23 missions have sprung up where the 500 tons of donated food supplies were widely distributed.

To God be all the glory! He is now providing us with another opportunity in Honduras to go beyond all that we could think or plan or estimate.

The initial 500 tons of food went a long way toward saving uncounted multitudes of Hondurans from starvation, but those supplies have now been depleted. Reclaiming crop land from the hurricane's devastation will be a daunting long-term task, and many Honduran families find themselves without adequate food.

The familiar plea has gone out again for

emergency food relief (see lead article on opposite page of this issue).

It's again time for Mississippi Baptists to step up and obey the clear instructions of the Savior (Matt. 25:31-46). He has given us the resources; it's up to us to find the will.

We should not forget that the last time God sent us on this crucial assignment, he provided so much food for our own stomachs that none of us missed a meal while sending nearly one million pounds of food to people who really needed it.

That's nothing short of phenomenal, but we barely noticed.

The new challenge has been laid before us. Will Mississippi Baptists be found faithful? If history serves as judge, the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Let's get busy about the Lord's work.

GUEST OPINION:



Do you really need your association?

By J. C. Prather, director of missions
Prentiss Association, Booneville

Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention in a world association. The question is how you and your church can get involved in the vital ministries of your association in the years to come.

The ministry task of Prentiss Association is to effectively manage and utilize God's resources to accomplish God's agenda in four general ministry development areas: missions, church, leadership, and associational.

The Baptist association's ministry includes: fellowship, promotion of harmony in faith and practices, management of resources and services, and development of missions and partnerships to carry out the Great Commission.

Therefore, the question is not whether there is a need for the



● theologically- and historically-based. From New Testament times to today, churches have been both autonomous and interdependent. Associations will continue to provide the network for

churches with shared beliefs.

● purpose-driven, focused primarily on helping its congregations fulfill the Great Commission locally and globally. It will be a broker of information on how to accomplish that task.

● contextually relevant. It must be entrepreneurial in its "delivery system." It must structure, staff, and strategize to fit its unique blend of churches and communities.

● congregationally focused and service oriented. The association must know its churches intimately and be proactive in meeting the needs of those churches.

● uniquely positioned. Beyond the local church, the association is the best entity in the Southern Baptist Convention for building relationships where churches accomplish together what they cannot accomplish alone. It must be a network of trust, mutual support, reconciliation, unity, and common vision.

Remember that your association is a self-governing fellowship of autonomous churches, sharing their faith and passion for missions in an important setting.

Remember also that your association is whatever your church and the other churches work in partnership to make it.

May your association be a ministry of Kingdom work.

Growing Churches Conference slated for Gulfshore

Two conferences at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian on July 29-31 and Aug. 6-7 will offer opportunities for church leaders to be trained for the coming church year, according to Don Lum, a consultant in the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The 1999 Growing Churches Conferences, which are designed to equip church leadership for the 21st century, will be presented by the MBCB Equipping Team in cooperation with seven MBCB departments.

"This is an opportunity to bring your organizational leadership to be trained, challenged, equipped, and spiritually renewed for the new year," Lum said.

Growing Churches I, on July 29-31, focuses on discipleship



Edgemon

and family ministry, while Growing Churches II, on Aug. 6-7, focuses on Bible Study and Sunday School, Lum said.

Special guests at Growing Churches I will be Roy Edgemon, director of Discipleship and Family Ministry at Lifeway Christian Resources, and musical leaders Gordon and Donna Alford. Gordon Alford is minister of music at First Church, Vancleave.

A special feature of Growing Churches II will be a segment on multi-media and creative worship experiences.

"Both conferences will offer demonstration labs for younger preschoolers, TeamKID clubs for older preschoolers and children, and Bible studies for youth," Lum pointed out.

The conferences include study sessions led by specialists from the following MBCB departments: Discipleship and Family Ministries, Sunday School, Men's Ministry, Woman's Missionary Union, Church Administration and Pastoral Ministries, Evangelism, Church Media Library, Missions Extension and Assoc. Adm., and Stewardship.

In addition, the Broadcast Services Department will provide conferences during the week of July 29-31 while Missions Extension and Associational Administration will provide conferences during the week of Aug. 6-7.

For reservation information



The Alfords

Jackson (800) 748-1651.

at Gulfshore Assembly, contact manager Frank Simmons at 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571-3200. Telephone (228) 452-7261.

For more information on the conferences, contact one of the sponsoring MBCB departments at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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Hondurans again in need of food relief

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Hondurans struggling to feed their families in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch are once again in need of Mississippi Baptists' help, according to the leaders of the state convention's disaster relief effort.

The initial food supplies sent by our state and other agencies have now been depleted. With the planted crops not producing well, the Honduran people are faced with severe food problems, said Jim Didlake, director of Men's Ministries for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The Men's Ministry department and Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) are coordinating an urgent request from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to form a special multi-year partnership with Honduran Baptists to help provide for the needs of people left destitute by the 1998 hurricane.

"Southern Baptist missionaries in Honduras have requested that Mississippi, along with Alabama and Louisiana, be involved in this latest food drive.

"In the next several weeks, we will attempt to collect supplies for Honduras that can get the people through this critical time. The food will be distributed by our missionaries and the Baptist churches there," Didlake said.



NEW HOMES — A group of Virginia Baptist volunteers (above) begins work on a house for a pair of Honduran families left destitute by Hurricane Mitch. A Honduran man (below left) prepares roof rafters as part of his agreement to provide labor needed to complete his family's new home. Mississippi Baptists have committed to a two-year special partnership with Honduran Baptists that includes the construction of 300 similar two-family units. (BR special photos)

Dry staple foods are the focus on this latest collection. Canned goods, water, clothes, and similar items are not needed at this time, Didlake pointed out.

The dry staple foods should be placed in the usual 1.5 cubic-foot packing boxes available from moving companies. The boxes can be dropped off June 18 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and on June 19 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at:

- ◆ Sardis: First Church, located at 108 West Lee Street.
- ◆ Columbus: Old Columbus Marble Works building, located at 804 Fourth Street.
- ◆ Jackson: The Baptist Building, located at 515 Mississippi Street.
- ◆ Hattiesburg: New Fred's building, located at the intersection of Highways 49 & 11, south of Cloverleaf Mall.

"Containers will be shipped immediately after these two dates. It will be vital that the food boxes be delivered to these shipping points on the specified dates so we can get the food to Honduras as soon as possible," Didlake stressed.

In November and December of last year, Baptists in Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Tennessee shipped nearly one million pounds of food valued at \$605,000 to the Honduran people. The

food filled 22 massive ocean-going containers. Baptists in the four states also contributed almost \$314,000 in cash for the relief effort.

"Already there are 23 new missions from the earlier food drive. In addition, we are building 300 homes from earlier funds received," Didlake said.

Because of the success of those 23 new missions, Spanish-language Bibles are in great demand, Didlake reported, and cash contributions are being accepted to fund the purchase of the Bibles.

"This (food drive and Bible purchase) will be another opportunity to be a part of the mission work that is changing our world," he said.

There are also openings on volunteer construction teams and other relief projects for Mississippi Baptists interested in helping the people of Honduras, Didlake added.

For information on volunteer opportunities, contact the MBCB Partnership Missions Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson at (800) 748-1651.

For information on the latest food collection and the Spanish-language Bible purchase, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry or Mississippi WMU at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

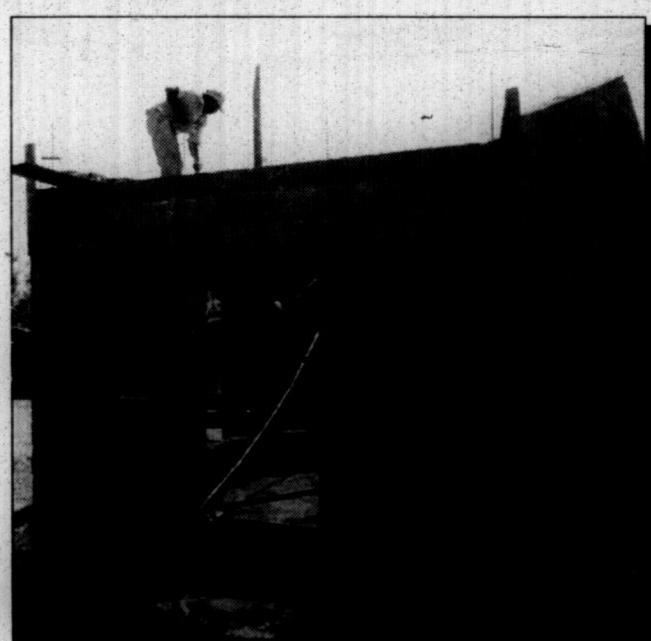
Partnership needs

The Partnership Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention has announced the following needs for volunteers for Ukraine partnership missions projects. Each trip costs \$1,695 from Jackson.

May 22 — June 1, Construction/Evangelism Team. One volunteer needed. Team leader: Brent Barker, Goodwater Church, Magee (601) 849-2245.

Sept. 2-15 — Evangelism/Church Starting. Four volunteers needed. Team leader: John Perkins, Northwest Association, Hernando (601) 429-5033.

Sept. 16-29 — Evangelism/Church Starting. Three volunteers needed. Team leader: Dan Robertson, First Church, Natchez. (601) 442-1464.



Lamar Christian School open for business

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

SBC Ministers' Wives to meet in Atlanta

ATLANTA (BP) — Jill Briscoe will be the featured speaker at this year's Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference at noon Tuesday, June 15, in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta.

Tickets for the 1999 luncheon are significantly reduced in price this year due to achieving the first goal amount for the SBC Ministers' Wives Endowment Fund. Tickets requested by June 1 are \$10 each. Tickets requested after June 1 and at the Southern Baptist Convention registration area in Atlanta on Sunday and Monday will be \$12 each.

"Renewal on the Run" is the theme for this 44th annual session of the Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference, announced Lanese Dockery, president for 1998-99. Dockery is the wife of David Dockery, president of Union University, Jackson, Tenn.

To request the \$10 luncheon tickets before June 1, send a check (made payable to the SBC Ministers' Wives Conference) and a self-addressed stamped envelope to the group's treasurer, Diane Newell, at 8649 Autumn Green Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

Last Fall, 97 students ranging from age four through the eighth grade became the inaugural class of the Lamar Christian School (LCS) near Purvis.

"This is the first Christian private school in the Southern Baptist Convention to be owned and operated by a Baptist association, to my knowledge," said Glen Schultz, director of Christian School Development of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

Billy Murphy, director of missions (DOM) for Lamar Association, admits he was at first a bit hesitant entering into this ministry.

"When the school came up, I had to ask, 'Is this associational work?' I ran it by other DOMs, and they pretty much agreed they wouldn't want to do it — but ministries are changing, including the ministry of associations," Murphy said.

Schultz said what Lamar Association has done in establishing a Christian school program could serve as a model for other associations. "It provides a basis of support that a church, taking it on by itself, cannot provide," he said.

The project began four years earlier when a layman in the county proposed donating 25 acres of land for the formation of a Christian school.

"The timing was not right. They had just finished a new association building and were trying to pay for it," said Lewis Nicolosi, LCS administrator and former pastor of First Church, Purvis.

Two years later the layman again offered to donate 25 acres of prime real estate just off of Highway 589 on Purvis/Oloh Road in central Lamar County. Doug Benedict,

Lamar Association DOM at the time, decided to run with it.

The association appointed a study committee which brought back a recommendation to begin the school in the fall of 1998. Each church was asked to vote in business session either for or against the proposal. The recommendation was adopted 19 to one.

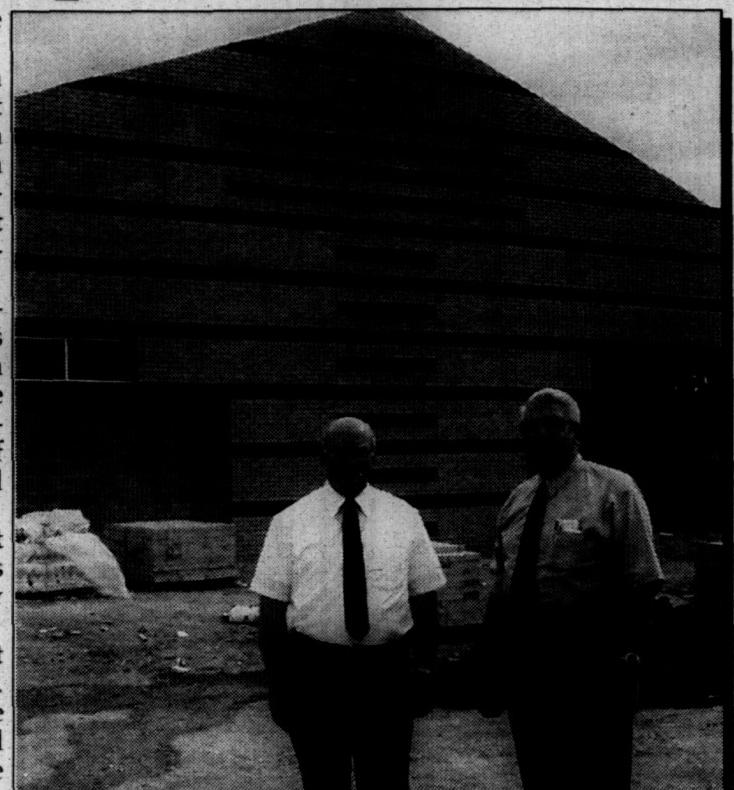
The master plan for a three-phase building project was developed. Phase I, which includes 10 classrooms, office space, and restrooms, is expected to be completed in June of this year at a cost of around \$450,000, Nicolosi said.

LCS is currently meeting at Good Hope Church, which is about a half-mile from the new school's campus.

Already, enrollment for next year is approaching 200. Nicolosi expects that by the time they begin the 1999-2000 school year this August, they will have already outgrown their new building.

"The most valid statement for me is that the school has proven itself to be absolutely what God wants, is from parents' evaluations of student behavior and attitudes, and the patterns that have changed in the lives of students as they relate to others and to their parents," Nicolosi said.

"We have parents who call and tell me that they cannot believe the difference since coming here. People visit and ask, 'How do you have this kind of classroom



ASSOCIATION SCHOOL — Lamar Association director of missions Billy Murphy (left) and Louis Nicolosi, Lamar Christian School administrator, survey the new building being constructed on the campus of Lamar Christian School near Purvis. (Photo by Carl M. White)

control? We discipline according to God's Word," Nicolosi said.

For more information on the school, contact Murphy at Lamar Association, 2843 Highway 589, Hattiesburg, MS 39042, or telephone (601) 268-7334; or Lewis Nicolosi, Lamar Christian School, P.O. Box 880, Purvis, MS 39475.

people of Israel through the wilderness, all the way to the edge of the Promised Land, only to be stopped by an extra-wide load of ten unbeliefing spies.

The problem was not that they did not want to go into the land, but more importantly they would block everyone else from going into the land.

What can you do when you know what you need to do but you can't do anything for those who keep you from doing what you know you ought to be doing?

• Keep doing what you can. Keep moving and keep working.

• Keep praying. Stay in touch with God. He knows where you are. He knows the obstacles and He knows how to get around the obstacles. Stay in touch with him.

• Keep trusting. For Moses it was a 40-year wait. For you and me it may be less, or it may be more.

In time, the 10 faithless, negative spies got out of the way. In time, and after many miles, the double-wide blockade moved over and in time God opens up the channels of blessings. Trust him!

• Be ready. Be poised when God says, "Now you can go ahead." If you pull off the road or go back, you will not be ready when God gets ready.

The bottom line is a simple word for all from the heart of God's great prophet — Here am I, send me! (Isa. 6:8 KJV)

DOUBLE-WIDE BARRIERS

The other day I was on an Interstate highway when I suddenly had to slow down to about 35 mph. My first thought was there must be a wreck ahead but I never came upon a wreck. Trucks, cars, all kinds of vehicles were creeping along in open country on the Interstate. Mile after mile we were all reduced to "turtle-ism."

Finally, I could see ahead. There was an extra-wide load



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

covering both lanes. It was a huge truck transporting some kind of building — not a house trailer, but a building. As far as I could see behind me, there were cars and trucks having to drive at 30-40 mph on the Interstate.

The buildup was getting to be miles long and the truck kept all of us from making progress.

The further we went the more I wondered, "Why doesn't the driver pull over stop and clear up this logjam?"

He didn't, but instead just kept easing along mile after mile at a speed that felt like we were sitting still. Nobody could get around.

It was not a

good time for me to be thinking about preaching a sermon on **patience**. In fact, it was a good time for me to think about titling a sermon, "Why Don't You Get Your Big Self Out of the Way and Let Me By?"

As the cars kept stacking up behind me, I searched for significant things that could be learned from this undesired moment. I told myself, "Just slow down and enjoy the Mississippi scenery," but I did not listen too well. I kept wanting to get by!

While that was the first (and hopefully last) time I have gotten behind such a huge load on the Interstate, I thought about those times when in my spiritual journey a big double-wide blockage took place.

I've had those experiences like possibly you have, where big, double-wide, oversized expressions of doubt and unbelief kept me from getting on down the road.

Although the Interstate highway system had not been developed, Moses knew what that was like as he led the peo-

New name, new look



Employees of the former Baptist Book Store on Ridgewood Court in Jackson look on as workers remove the old signage and mount the new name, LifeWay Christian Store, above the building entrance. Sporting the new uniform look to go along with the name change are sales representatives (from left) Valerie Slay, Heather Burczynski, Sonya Anderson, store manager Jerry Sager, and Jessica Flick. The name change will be marked by a special sale May 15-22, and a May 22 celebration that begins at 11 a.m. and will include book signings, clowning, live music, refreshments, and a radio remote broadcast. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Miller working on church 'dirty little secret'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Mike Miller's heart message to churches springs from what he feels is a "dirty little secret" shared by many congregations today: a lack of harmony between the pastor and the church, ranging in intensity from nagging frustration to outright hostility.

Miller, director of the church leadership group at LifeWay Christian Resources, writes in a LifeWay Press volume, "Honoring the Ministry," of the biblical principles of honor in an effort to encourage appropriate honor for all the ministers and leaders God has given churches.

To avoid the awkwardness a minister may naturally feel in discussing the topic in his church, Miller has addressed his message to deacons, the ones he believes to be the most influential lay leaders in churches.

As a minister, Miller said he has become increasingly alarmed about the relationships among pastors, church staff, lay leaders, and church members.

Today, he said 23 ministers and their families are affected by forced terminations each week within the Southern Baptist Convention.

"It isn't right," Miller lamented. "How do we get to this problem? When the leadership and the church are not together, everything goes into the ditch."

Miller said he went to the

Bible for answers and concluded, "What must be restored in every church are the principles of biblical honor — honoring God, one another, and the focal point of double-honor to the minister."

The two-year study, he said, "had a personal, spiritual affect on my life. The urgency came back to me about the issue of forced terminations."

And while the most recent figures from LifeWay's LeaderCare ministry indicated instances of forced termination have declined, Miller declared, "We have a commitment at

LifeWay to see forced terminations reduced to zero."

Miller believes deacons can do more to impact the stability of a church than any other group. One area in which he wants to see deacons assume leadership is that of annual service anniversary recognition.

LifeWay research indicates that among 1,400 ministers,

fewer than 20% receive any kind of annual recognition.

"This can't be right," Miller said. "How can God honor a church if it doesn't have a proper relationship with the pastor?"



Miller

Miller wants deacons and other lay leaders to take a look at the relational love and respect in the church.

"We don't say 'thank you' to people. We don't recognize people," he said. "If church people don't honor one another and their ministers, they are not honoring God."

"Most churches have more

policies for weddings, flowers, and custodial needs than they do for dealing with conflict between the minister and the church," he continued. "Failure to talk about this issue has made it worse."

Honoring the Ministry offers deacons, personnel committees, pastor-search committees, and other church members ideas for improving the practice of honor for ministers.

Among topics Miller addresses are the need for honor in the church; honoring God, others, and God's ministers; dealing with ministers and church problems; and selection of new staff members.

"Honoring the Ministry" may be obtained by calling LifeWay Christian Resources at (800) 458-2772, in local LifeWay Christian Stores or on-line at www.lifewaystores.com.

Conferences based on Miller's book will be offered during National Conference for Church Leadership at:

- ◆ LifeWay Conference Center Glorieta (N.M.), July 2-5 and July 5-9.

- ◆ LifeWay Conference Center Ridgecrest (N.C.), July 12-16 and July 16-19.

Registration may be made by calling Glorieta at (800) 797-4222 or Ridgecrest at (800) 588-7222.

Additional information on National Conference for Church Leadership may be obtained by calling (615) 251-2055.

Southwestern moves center to Criswell

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, has added Criswell College to the schools with which it has a cooperative relationship.

Southwestern will move its off-campus center in Garland, Texas, a Dallas suburb, to the Criswell campus in downtown Dallas, under an agreement reported to Southwestern's trustees during their March 9-11 meeting in Fort Worth. Southwestern will begin offering master's-level courses on the Criswell campus, and Southwestern students will be able to take undergraduate level classes at Criswell.

Criswell College also announced March 25 it is phasing out its master's-level programs, except one lay-oriented program. Richard Wells, president of the college, indicated that Criswell will focus on expanded opportunities for training at the undergraduate level.

YouthLink 2000 locking up prime meeting venues

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — First MTV, then the Church of Scientology requested space last year for new millennium celebrations at the Tampa Ice Palace, a beautiful venue overlooking Tampa Bay. Because YouthLink 2000 already had the 20,000 capacity dome under contract, each group was turned away.

As the dawn of the millennium approaches, the foresight of YouthLink 2000 planners has left them in an enviable position among millennial party-planners — many of whom have been left waiting in the wings waiting for prime meeting venues.

As early as 1996, planners for YouthLink 2000 — the millennial event for 200,000 teenage and college students — had under contract most of its seven venues across the United States.

Perhaps the resolve on the part of YouthLink 2000 to hold its space has surprised a few, like the Church of Scientology. They first made an offer to buy out its contract — at a nice profit for YouthLink 2000.

After that was turned down, in January the Church of Scientology offered free use of costly sound and light setup if YouthLink 2000 would give up two days of occupancy.

Concerned for its own full schedule and the quality of its event, YouthLink 2000 once again said no.

In Philadelphia, negotiations are currently underway over space in the Philadelphia Convention Center. This time the mayor's millennium committee would like to share use of the elegant Grand Hall (the converted century-old Reading Terminal Train Shed with its soaring 90-

foot, sky-lit ceiling) where on Dec. 29-30 YouthLink 2000/Philadelphia will hold pizza parties and other gatherings.

"The shock for the city of Philadelphia is that this venue is part of the city, and the mayor's committee was not aware that the space was under contract," notes Charles Snow, site coordinator for YouthLink 2000/Philadelphia.

While other groups are just now scrambling to put together large millennium events, the vision for YouthLink 2000 came in the 1980s to Southern Baptists Richard Ross, one of the originators of True Love Waits, and Dean Finley who brought W.O.W (Win Our World) and See You At the Pole to the denomination.

In 1989, Finley and Ross sat down to share their vision with a small group of denominational leaders. By 1992 they had formed a steering committee to explore the idea seriously and to seek bids on a management plan.

Realizing the potential to challenge hundreds of thousands of young people with the gospel, in 1995 agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention — now LifeWay Christian Resources, the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union — agreed to fund the dream.

In Atlanta, YouthLink 2000 — currently set for the Georgia World Congress Center with its 30,000 capacity — is eyeing a first option on the 70,000-seat Georgia Dome, also the site of the 1999 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

If the date ultimately chosen for the Peach Bowl allows it, YouthLink 2000 is

first in line for the space.

For more information about YouthLink 2000, 1-888-YOUTHLC. Registration is \$60 now; \$75 after Aug. 1 and \$90 after Oct. 1.

Clowning around in Starkville



Members of the Mississippi State University Baptist Student Union's Beautiful Feet Clown Troop explain the love of Jesus to children on Main Street during the recent Starkville Arts Festival. The clowns are (from left) "C.C." — Christy Fulgham, Ackerman — and "Raindrop" — Myra Miller, Caledonia. (BR special photo)

1999 Pastors' Conference annual meeting

JUNE 13-14, 1999

Georgia Dome ♦ Atlanta, Georgia

Tenn. pastor nominated for conference post

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, Tenn., will be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference in Atlanta in June.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church, Woodstock, Ga., according to an April 13 announcement in Nashville, will nominate Sutton. Hunt was in Nashville to preach revival services at LifeWay Christian Resources.

As pastor of the largest Southern Baptist church in the Nashville area, Sutton has been at Two Rivers since 1986. It has 6,500 members with more than 2,000 people baptized since 1986 and more than \$3 million channeled through the Cooperative Program for missions. Total gifts last year at Two Rivers were more than \$6 million.

A native of Mobile, Ala., Sutton earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of South Alabama and M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth.

SESSION I SUNDAY, JUNE 13 1:45 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Pre-Session Musical Praise
Musical Praise
Welcome
Scripture and Prayer
Musical Praise
Message
Congregational Praise
Message
Choral Praise
Message
Prayer, Offering, and Musical Praise
Choral Praise
Message
Benediction
Postlude

SESSION II SUNDAY, JUNE 13 6:15 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

Pre-Session Musical Praise
Welcome
Scripture and Prayer —
*Thomas Atwood, pastor,
First Church, Oxford*
Congregational Praise
Musical Praise
Congregational Praise
Musical Praise
Youth Presentation
Prayer, Offering, and Musical Praise
Message
Choral Praise
Message
Benediction
Postlude

SESSION III MONDAY, JUNE 14 8:30 P.M. - NOON.

Musical Praise
Welcome
Scripture and Prayer
Congregational Praise
Message
Choral Praise
Message
Congregational Praise
Prayer, Offering, and Musical Praise
Musical Praise
Message
Choral Praise
Musical Praise
Message
Benediction
Postlude

SESSION IV MONDAY, JUNE 14 1:15 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Pre-Session Musical Praise
Welcome
Scripture and Prayer
Musical Praise
Message
Congregational Praise
Choral Praise
Message
Election of Officers
Choral Praise
Message
Prayer, Offering, and Musical Praise
Congregational Praise
Message
Benediction
Postlude

SESSION V MONDAY, JUNE 14 6:15 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Pre-Session Musical Praise
Musical Praise
Scripture and Prayer
Welcome
Congregational Praise
Choral Praise
Message
Prayer, Offering, and Musical Praise
Musical Praise
Message
Congregational Praise
Musical Praise
Message
Benediction
Postlude

Oxford pastor on Pastors' Conf. program

ATLANTA (BP) — Tom Atwood, pastor of First Church, Oxford, and first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors' Conference, will offer Scripture and prayer as part of the agenda for the 1999 SBC Pastors' Conference June 13 in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

It's always been "a great worship experience" — and much more, said Mike Hamlet, president of this year's Pastors' Conference and 14-year pastor of First Church.

Hamlet said he is praying that pastors, church staff members, and laypeople who attend this year's June 13-14 Pastors' Conference in Atlanta will be reminded:

- "I'm called of God and he can use me to make a difference where I am," reflecting the conference theme, "Empowered for Tomorrow."

- "Being part of the Southern Baptist Convention gives me a chance to be a part of a team."

"No generation has ever had a greater opportunity to have an impact on their culture for Jesus Christ than we have right now as we move into a new millennium," Hamlet said.

"It is time for us to be proactive instead of reactive," he said. "Never before has the world been seeking answers so desperately — and we have the answer. We are not going to fix our prob-

lems politically, economically, or socially until we deal with the problem of the heart."

Christians are "empowered for tomorrow and need to claim the promise that God is going to lead us in the days ahead," Hamlet continued. "This begins not on the denominational level," he noted, "but in the local church that believes that, under the power of God, we can make a difference."

Pastors' Conference speakers, session by session, will be:

- Sunday, June 13, 2 p.m.: J. Kie Bowman, pastor, Hyde Park Church, Austin, Texas; Fed Lowery, pastor, First Church, Bossier City, La.; Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; and Larry Burkett, founder and president, Christian Financial Concepts, Gainesville, Ga.

- June 13, 6:30 p.m.: Robert E.

"Bob" Reccord, president, North American Mission Board; Jay Strack, evangelist from Orlando, Fla.; and John C. Maxwell, founder of Injoy, a Christian leadership ministry, Atlanta.

- Monday, June 14, 8:30 a.m.: Mark Corts, pastor, Calvary Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.; O.S. Hawkins, president, Annuity Board; Ed Young, pastor, Second Church, Houston.

- June 14, 1:30 p.m.: Richard Land, president, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Jerry Sutton, pastor, Two Rivers Church, Nashville, Tenn.; James T. Draper Jr., president, LifeWay Christian Resources; Bob "Mr. Inspiration" Wieland, Arcadia, Calif.

- June 14, 6:30 p.m.: Jerry Rankin, president, International Mission Board; Johnny Hunt, pastor, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.; and Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Note burning at Centreville Church, Centreville

Centreville Church, Centreville, held note burning services on April 25 to celebrate the final payment on office complex/fellowship hall. The building was begun in July, 1993, and completed in April 1994. Pictured is Billy McGregor, church treasurer; Brock Slabach, chairman of building committee; Jack Rogers, chairman of deacons; and John Brashier, pastor.

Bethel Church, Water Valley, will present its children and youth choirs spring

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Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting

JUNE 13-14, 1999

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

THEME: *Strength for Today — Bright Hope for Tomorrow*

SUNDAY, JUNE 13 ◆ 2:00 P.M.

Theme Interpretation
Patterns of Music
Call to Order
Announcements/introductions
Welcome
Special Music
Message
Prayertime

SUNDAY, JUNE 13 ◆ 7:30 P.M.

Theme Interpretation
Patterns of Music
Announcements/introductions
Message
Hymn
Introduction of Actees
Panelists
Offering for Vision Fund

Recognition of missionaries
Hymn
Special Music
Message
Prayertime

Announcements/introductions
Message

Hymn
Business session
Special Music
Executive Board Report
Prayertime

MONDAY, JUNE 14 ◆ 9:15 A.M.

Theme Interpretation
Patterns of Music

MONDAY, JUNE 14 ◆ 1:30 P.M.

Theme Interpretation
Patterns of Music
Announcements/introductions
Intro of Local Arrangements
Comm.
Hymn
President's Address
Prayertime

MONDAY, JUNE 14 ◆ 7:00 P.M.

Theme Interpretation
Patterns of Music
Announcements/introductions
Special Music
Message
Hymn
Special Music
Recognition for Dellanna O'Brien
Prayertime
Hymn

Miller to headline WMU meeting

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Addresses by noted author Calvin Miller and Hawaii pastor Paul Kaneshiro, along with the recognition of retiring WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien, will highlight the June 13-14 Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) annual meeting.

The yearly gathering of WMU members and guests will be held at Wiequa Road Church in Atlanta on Sunday and Monday prior to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting. Sessions begin at 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon and conclude Monday evening. The meeting will develop the theme, "Strength for Today, Bright Hope for Tomorrow."

Along with five plenary sessions, the WMU annual meeting schedule also will include five one-hour sessions for leadership training. These sessions will be restricted to registered participants only. The cost is \$35 per person prior to

May 21. The cost increases to \$50 per person after May 21.

Miller will speak during the Sunday evening session, which begins at 7:30 p.m. He has authored some 35 books including the trilogy, "The Singer," "The Song" and "The Finale." He currently serves as a professor at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala.

National WMU President Wanda Lee will give her address during the Monday afternoon session. She and Janet Hoffman, national recording secretary, will be nominated for their fourth term. They are eligible to serve five years.

Other program personalities for the two-day gathering include music director Karla Worley of Franklin, Tenn.; a team of international and North American missionaries; and the Wiequa Road Church choir.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Bucaciuc and Barton

Cornel Bucaciuc (left) is pictured receiving a certificate of ordination from Billy Barton Jr., pastor of Wade Church in Pascagoula. Bucaciuc, a native of Romania, now lives in Vancleave and is a chaplain at the Home of Grace. Barton met Bucaciuc in the Ukraine.

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Editor:

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EBC ALIVE AND WELL

Editor:

Did you know there is a convention of English language Baptist churches in Europe? The European Baptist Convention (EBC) was begun after World War II by American service men and women who saw a need for ministry among Americans away from home.

Most of these church planters were, and still are, Southern Baptist. While the EBC and the Southern Baptist Convention have no official connection the EBC continues to cherish its Southern Baptist roots.

Many of these churches were planted by International

Mission Board (IMB) missionaries, however only about a third still have IMB pastors. Most are small, particularly those which are not near large military bases.

However, all provide a valuable ministry to people from all parts of the globe. Many who have little access to the gospel in their home land hear about Christ for the first time in EBC churches.

Several military men have been called to full-time ministry in EBC churches and many young preachers return to other, less-free, countries with a zeal for telling others about Christ.

At the International Baptist Church of Cologne, where I am pastoring, we say we preach in English and reach the world.

As an IMB missionary I and the church feel it's time for us to take the next natural step in the life of our church. That is to call our own pastor. Our congregation represents perhaps twenty-five or more nationalities on any given Sunday. We are looking for someone who is willing to invest his life in this exciting and challenging ministry.

If you or someone you know may be interested please contact me. I will be glad to spend time telling you about our church and our work.

Butch Oglesby
Wilhelm-Busch Str. 32
50389 Wesseling, Germany
Oglesby@compuserve.com

WMU to offer training at Atlanta meet

ATLANTA — Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) will offer leadership training in conjunction with its annual meeting June 13-14 at Wiequa Road Baptist Church in Atlanta. The registration fee for the training portion is \$35 per person if registered by May 21. The cost is \$50 beyond that date.

While there is a fee for participating in the training conference, the annual meeting's five plenary sessions are open to the public.

The two-day event will include five one-hour training conference sessions. Conferences will cover a variety of topics, including spiritual and personal growth; ministry and evangelism tools; trends; and WMU programs.

Among the dozens of conference leaders are WMU and New Hope Publishers authors (and their books):

◆ Stuart Calvert, a former Mississippian, *Transformed: Shaped by the Hand of God*.

◆ Denise George, *God's Heart, God's Hands and Kids Can Talk to God*.

◆ Barbara Joiner, *Yours for the Giving*.

◆ Karla Worley, *Glimpses of Christ in Everyday Life*.

For a registration packet, contact Mississippi WMU office at (800) 748-1651; or call SBC WMU at (800) 968-7301. Information is also available at www.wmu.com.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JUST FOR THE RECORD



The Ruffins

Poplar Springs Drive Church, Meridian, will honor

James A. Ruffin on the occasion of his retirement as pastor of the church for 26 years, and his wife Virginia, on May 16. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University (MSU) and Southwestern Seminary. He has been in the pastoral ministry for 45 years. Former pastorate in Mississippi include First, Okolona; Como; and Pilgrims Rest, Batesville. He also served at Pleasant Grove, Chickasaw Association; and Cumberland, Webster Association; while a student at MSU. The Ruffins will continue to live in Meridian.

Galilee First Church, Gloster, will hold its second special service of "Celebration 175...1824-1999, Angels Among Us" on May 16.

Thomas Wicker, former pastor, will be the guest speaker. The second 35 years of the church's history will be presented by Maude Barney, a member of the church. At the conclusion of the service there will be a church-wide fellowship with lunch. Future events will be on June 20, July 18, concluding with Homecoming Sunday, Aug. 15.

The music ministries of Easthaven Church, Brookhaven; Petal-Harvey Church, Hattiesburg; Parkway Church, Natchez; and East McComb, McComb, will present GOD for US at Easthaven Church on May 23 at 6 p.m. The choirs and orchestras of these churches will combine together to have a 175-200 voice choir and a 25 piece orchestra. Graham Smith, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be the guest worship leader.

YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Jesus Christ

*Requests the Honor
of Your Presence
in Heaven!*

NAMB Vision Center to open during SBC meet

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — The North American Mission Board (NAMB) will host a grand opening for its new Vision Center on Wednesday, June 16, during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Atlanta. All SBC attendees are invited.

The Vision Center is an interactive, multi-media experience that will illustrate the past and future challenges of reaching North America for Christ, and will be open for regular business hours 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Buses from the Georgia Dome will run Wednesday from noon to 3:30 p.m.

Free tickets for the grand opening will be available at the NAMB booth at the convention center, as well as during the agency's presentation to the convention on Tuesday evening.

Henry Blackaby will be at the center from 2 to 3 p.m. on June 16 to autograph his new book "The Man God Uses," available for purchase at the agency's On Mission Resource Center. Blackaby also will be available to sign copies of his book on Thursday morning.

For more information on the grand opening, call (770) 410-6452 or e-mail lmitchell@namb.net. To schedule tours after the SBC grand opening, call (770) 410-6247 or email smccoy@namb.net.

Senior Adult Celebration will be held at Thirty-eighth Avenue Church, Hattiesburg, on May 16. The highlight of this celebration will take place at 7 p.m. when Scott Sontag, pianist and vocalist, will be in concert. Sontag is on staff at Louisiana College in Pineville, La. G. Wiley Abel is pastor. For more information, call the church office at (601) 264-3897.

Gold City will be in concert at Crossgates Church, Brandon, on May 23 at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information, contact the music and worship ministry office at (601) 825-2562.

New Zion Church, Crystal Springs, will celebrate its 152nd anniversary on May 23. Johnny Lee Taylor, former member, will be the speaker for the morning services followed by dinner on the grounds. Afternoon message will be drama by P.R.O.P.S. and singing by the King's messengers.

Leonard D. Howell and his wife Dorothy will be honored with a reception, May 23 from 2-4 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Shady Grove Church, Pontotoc. He is retiring after having preached for 35 years. Churches he pastored during this time were Mount View, Ripley; Macedonia, Myrtle; Glenfield, New Albany;

Evergreen, Louisville; and Shady Grove for nine years. Howell will be available for pulpit supply and can be contacted at 816 Temperance Hill Circle, Potts Camp, MS 38659, or phone (662) 333-6862.

Poplar Creek Nations Church, Kilmichael, will celebrate its 150th anniversary on May 22 and 23. Saturday activities will include a birthday party. Sunday, homecoming worship service will start at 10:30 a.m. with Eugene Bailey, pastor, and Jimmy Breland, guest speaker. Covered dish dinner on the grounds from noon - 1 p.m. and singing at 1:30 p.m.

STAFF CHANGES

Anne Cahoon, who lives in Harperville, is serving as preschool and children's minister at First Church, Morton, effective Feb. 9. She received her education at New Orleans Seminary and plans to continue her education there. Cahoon previously served as volunteer director of education at Harperville Church.



Cahoon

Drew Whittington is the new minister of music and youth/students at Magnolia Church, Laurel.

Old Pearl Valley, Neshoba County, has called **Mark McDonald** as pastor. He previously served at Hopewell Church, Scott County, for nine years.

First Church, Columbus, has added two new members

to its staff. **Bobby Sanderson**, minister of music, attended William Carey College. He previously served at Western Avenue Church, Statesville,

We hope you and your church will join us on Adopt An Annuitant Sunday — June 27, 1999 — as we extend God's hand to faithful servants who dedicated their lives to the gospel ministry.

O. S. Hawkins
President — Chief Executive Officer
Annuity Board, SBC

Adopt An Annuitant Sunday

Churches across the Southern Baptist Convention are being challenged to adopt a retired annuitant through the Annuity Board for \$900 per year. The Adopt An Annuitant ministry provides a \$75 monthly supplement to retirement incomes of Southern Baptist ministers and their widows in desperate need. June 27 is "Adopt An Annuitant Sunday" through the SBC. Free bulletin inserts which explain this worthy ministry are available for your worship service by calling our toll-free number, 1-800-262-0511. Order your inserts today.



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Yeary: youth in need of integrity examples

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — What young people need today more than ever are examples of integrity, Dan Yeary told youth ministers at Southwestern Seminary's Youth Lab.

"One thing about kids, they respect people who can be trusted because [trusted people] are pure," said Dan Yeary, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Church.

Those who minister to youth thus must be willing to be holy, Yeary said, urging youth ministers to take up their crosses and focus on Christ for their youth to have examples of persons of integrity.

The conference, which included seminars and joint worship times, drew more than 350 youth ministers from the seminary and numerous states April 16-18 at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary.

Yeary, a Southwestern graduate and pastor of one of the largest churches in the Southwest, said God's people have always been on the edge of opportunity and every generation has had a unique chance to witness for Christ.

"Will we take advantage of it or just pretend?" he asked.

Yeary quoted the Joshua 3:5 account of the Israelites' preparations to cross the Jordan River and enter Canaan. He noted the Israelites had never

fought before, did not know how to swim and were expected to cross the Jordan while it was in flood stage.

Before they lined up to cross the river, Joshua commanded them to consecrate themselves, or make themselves clean in preparation for God's manifestation, a commandment that holds true for youth ministry today, Yeary said.

Youth ministers also need to concentrate on God's Word, Yeary said. He recounted God's command to the Israelites to stay 1,000 yards behind the ark of the covenant as they approached the Jordan so they could see God stop up the river and allow them to cross on dry land. Like the people of Israel concentrating on the ark as a reminder of God's presence, ministers today must fix their attention on the Scriptures, Yeary said.

"I believe this book. I can't improve on it one iota. My job is to understand it and communicate it," he said.

"Love the Word of God," he exhorted his audience. "If you love it and live it, kids will follow you everywhere."

Youth ministers were urged by Yeary not only to consecrate and concentrate, but to celebrate as well. After the children of Israel had crossed the

Jordan, Joshua commanded them to stack stones as a memorial to the miracle the Lord had performed.

Yeary warned the youth workers they face numerous challenges, including being seen as second-class ministers.

"If you will shake it off, it'll make all the difference in the world," he said.

Phil Briggs, one of two Southwestern faculty members involved with the lab, said this year's event was "one of the best in a long time."

During the conference, participants attended seminars with topics that included preparing youth for college, recreation, using the Internet in ministry, evangelism in youth ministry, planning youth camps, and music in youth ministry.

Briggs, along with Rosemary

Hoover, led a seminar on helping parents understand and parent "millennial kids."

Briggs and Hoover conducted a profile on millennial youth, defined as those who will graduate in 2001. The seminar's goal, he said, was to answer the question: "How do we as youth ministers become parent educators?"

Compared to Generation X, Briggs said, millennial kids are more idealistic and altruistic. "There's been a shift where these kids are much more conscious of helping other people," he said.

The conference ended with a roast for Briggs, who is leaving the youth lab to serve in the seminary's department of collegiate ministries.

Next year's Youth Lab, the 32nd annual gathering, is scheduled for April 7-9.

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May opening! Embassy Suites, across from Georgia Dome. Special rates! Hampton Inn Midtown: four nights, shuttle, breakfast, free parking: \$235/person, double occupancy. Christian Travelers 1-800-972-8952.

MINISTER OF YOUTH — Large youth-oriented church seeks a Minister of Youth with experience. A passion for the lost is required and a seminary degree is preferred. Send resumes to: Personnel Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 331 Cleveland Street, Clearwater, Florida 33755.



BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

HOECOMINGS

Mt. Olive (Carroll): May 30

services will begin at 10:30 a.m. Leon Holly, Vaiden, message; Mt. Olive Church choir, under the direction of Gary and Linda Lewis, music, covered dish luncheon in fellowship hall at noon, Ron Mercer, former pastor, guest speaker; Mike McIlwain, music, Ernest Allier, pastor.

Causeyville (Lauderdale): May 16

Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., covered dish luncheon in fellowship hall at noon, Ron Mercer, former pastor, guest speaker; Mike McIlwain, music, Ernest Allier, pastor.

Bellevue (Pontotoc): May 16

11 a.m., Lee Graham, guest speaker; noon fellowship meal and afternoon singing; Lamar Pickens, pastor.

Mt. Gilead, Meridian: May 16

covered dish lunch following morning service; Jim Smith, guest speaker; Jim Rickies, interim pastor.

Antioch, Monticello: May 23

10 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall, noon; Midnight Cry, Brookhaven, guest singers; Bert E. Lewis, Opelousas, La., guest speaker; singing, 1:15 p.m.; Carl Mason, pastor.

Antioch, Florence: May 30;

regular services, covered dish lunch at noon.

Mississippi College recognized retired faculty and staff recently at a reception in honor of their years of service. The honorees, pictured from left with Howell W. Todd, president, are C. S. "Sim" Worley, Clinton, director, physical plant; Van D. "Doc" Quick, Clinton, vice president for Alumni and Student Affairs; Ralph M. Taylor, Clinton, professor, School of Music; William Gerald Claxton, Madison, assistant professor, School of Music; Charles E. Bolton, Bolton, grounds, physical plant; Tommie H. Carey, Jackson, plumbing, physical plant; seated in front, from left, are Nanette M. Sibley, Jackson, registrar; Susie C. Jordan, director, downtown office; and Ruby Louise Hudson, Clinton, secretary, public relations. Not pictured is Barbara S. Barber, Raymond, director of scholarships, Institutional Advancement.

Baptist disaster relief units in Okla., Kan.

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Several Oklahoma Baptist churches opened their doors to victims, rescue workers, and clean-up crews May 3 in the aftermath of one of the worst tornado onslights in the state's history.

Nearly 1,000 people poured into the facilities of First Church, Moore, after a fierce mass of tornadoes — one that reached F-5 status, up to a mile wide with winds of 260 mph — leveled homes, churches, and businesses in Bridge Creek, Moore, southwest Oklahoma City, Del City, and Midwest City.

Also housing and feeding victims were First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, and First Church, Perry, which served as the central headquarters for those caught in the tornadoes that ripped through that part of the state.

Del City's First Southern members were mourning the death of retired associate pastor Jake Self, who lost his life after the tornado picked up a van and dropped it on his house where he and his wife were huddled in a closet. Self suffered a head injury, but his wife survived.

Also destroyed was First Southern's missionary house which, at the time, was occupied by Steve and Patsy Ellis.

First Southern pastor Tom Elliff, who lost his home to a fire in February, was wiped out again; this time by the devastating tornado which leveled the townhouse in which he and his wife were living.

Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief units were set up at both First Southern and First Church, Moore.

Additionally, a feeding unit from Texas and one from Arkansas are expected to arrive May 5 in the Oklahoma City area, to be followed by a shower unit operated by the North American Mission Board from Albany, Ga.

In Haysville, Kan., a town of 9,000 near Wichita, where three

people were reported killed — including a one-month-old baby — in another outbreak of tornado destruction May 3, the Kansas-Nebraska Baptist feeding unit has set up operations at First Church.

A Missouri Baptist feeding unit and a cleanup and recovery unit are expected to arrive in Haysville May 5, followed by a shower unit operated by Tennessee Baptists on May 6.

Yet another Texas Baptist relief is talking post-storm ministry in DeKalb, Texas.

The May 3 tornadoes claimed at least 43 lives in Oklahoma and Kansas, injured nearly 700 others and destroyed an estimated 1,500 homes.

In all, 76 tornadoes were counted by meteorologists in the two states and in Texas and Nebraska May 3.

Alan Cox, pastor of the Moore congregation, who lives in the southern part of the Oklahoma City suburb, said he saw the massive tornado coming, and it missed his house by about 300 to 400 yards.

"As I stood and watched its path after it passed our house, I realized it was headed straight for the church," he said.

Cox also headed for the

church, which took him almost two hours. When he got there, the church building was standing although there had been extensive damage to brick-work, windows, and the roof. The sign out front was a crumpled mass. The only office in the church which was damaged was Cox's which took two 2-by-4s through it.

The neighborhood across the street from the church where many of First Church's members live was almost totally destroyed.

"There are hundreds of houses, not just damaged, but gone," Cox said.

He said he realized the church needed to set up a command post because the building was the only one in Moore that could handle that kind of need.

In minutes the Department of Civil Emergency Management, Highway Patrol, and Red Cross set up stations at the facility.

Among other Oklahoma churches destroyed or damaged in the May 3 tornado onslaught, according to reports received by the Baptist Messenger news-journal, were Pink Church in Pottawatomie-Lincoln Association; Regency

Park Church, Moore; Sooner Church, Mid-west City; and Ridgecrest Church in Grady Association.

In Mulhall in north central Oklahoma, reports were that 80% of the town was destroyed, including the Baptist parsonage which was just completed. The new pastor at Mulhall had been on the field one day.

Health care worker Melody Hughes, a member of Eagle Heights Church in Oklahoma City who works with Oklahoma Orthopedics, said during search-and-rescue operations, she saw a house that was destroyed — but left was a shelf with a collection of angels on it.

"Not one angel was disturbed," she said in amazement. Hughes also said they found a fish tank in a destroyed house, and the fish had not been disturbed.

Cox said he estimates \$3-4 million damage to First Church's \$15 million plant.

"I know we will have to have a new roof, and that will be \$2 million alone."

Asked if the church had prepared for a disaster like this, Cox said, "We weren't prepared, but we were ready."

REVIVAL DATES

Magnolia, Laurel: May 16-19; James Messer Sr., evangelist; Drew Whittington, music; lunch following Sunday morning service. Mark Byrd, pastor.

McCall Creek (Franklin): May 21 and 22, 7 p.m.; May 23, 11 a.m.; Harold Anderson, pastor, speaker; Jo Porter, music leader; and David Roberts, pianist.

Faith, Silver Creek: May 23-26; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m.; followed by lunch in fellowship hall, and 1 p.m. service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Dale Authement, pastor of Topeka Church, evangelist; John L. Jones, pastor.

Old Pearl Valley (Neshoba): June 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Clay Chancellor, Stonewall, evangelist; Mark McDonald, pastor.

Antioch, Florence: May 16-

19, Sunday, 11 a.m. service with special music presentation by Shawn Huhn, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Howard Collier, evangelist; Sandy Sartor, music leader and soloist; Grant McElveen, pastor.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I'm a classic example of the "Supermom" burnout syndrome. How can I possibly get everything done that needs to be done in a 24-hour period?

Take the fraying "S" off your chest and ask yourself these questions: "Who gave me the 'S'? What do I get from wearing the 'S'? If I lay this 'S' down, who will pick it up?" Take a few minutes to reflect on your answers. Take a few days. Ask your friends and family for input. You were given the "S" by expectations, either yours or someone else's. You gain acceptance and encouragement from the "S." Accept the words of appreciation (however slim) for who you are, not what you do. Seek the

Lord and hear his approval. You are first a human being — not a human doing. If you lay down the "S," life will not crumble. In this Spring time, step away and take a leisurely walk. Smell some flowers, play in the water, and learn a good joke. If you don't start taking life in stride, you can be sure your body will somehow get your attention to stop this abuse.

My wife calls me at work almost every day to demand I discipline our kids over the telephone. I am not comfortable with this, so what should I say when she calls?

Say, "Thanks for calling, but I trust your judgement on this one."

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Missionaries: God's grace sufficient during terrifying robbery ordeal

LIBREVILLE, Gabon (BP) — A bullet and a nightgown don't have much in common. At least they didn't until five armed robbers awakened International Mission Board missionaries Anne and Steve Seaberry at their home in Libreville, Gabon, in late April.

Even while the Seaberrys watched the robbers pack everything the couple owned — including their wedding rings — into their own car, God used the two signs — a bullet and a nightgown — to give them peace and hope.

Peace came when Anne realized she was wearing a longer nightgown than usual. Bowing her head, she thanked the Lord she was modestly attired in front of the robbers. "God immediately said to me: 'I have gone before you and made sure you were covered. I will protect you and Steve,'" Anne said.

The clock seemed to stand still in the hour or

so it took the robbers to stow everything in the car. All the while, the Seaberrys wondered if they'd live to see the sun rise again. Then, as the thieves were preparing to leave, one turned in the doorway, pointed his gun at them and cocked it.

"Oh Jesus," Anne prayed out loud. A bullet immediately fell to the floor. Shocked, the man looked at his gun and realized that was his only bullet. He left the room, presumably to get more bullets. The frightened couple began whispering Jesus' name, over and over again, until two men came in to tie them up. Closing the bedroom door, the men left the house several minutes later.

"We know that Jesus protected us. In looking back, we believe that our calm, thus God's peace, also helped save us," she said. "We did nothing to provoke them to harm us and probably surprised them with such calmness. God's grace is sufficient."

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Thank you, Lord .

Psalm 100:1-5

By Ken Hester

Many congregations forget to worship when they gather. Instead, they busy themselves with important, though peripheral, matters. They see church as a Bible information center. They come with empty notebooks and go home with full ones. Some act as if church is a social club or a place to make business contacts. Others behave like church is a center for the performing arts.

None of these activities are sinful. These activities, however, do not constitute worship. In the book *Up With Worship: How to Quit Playing Church*, Anne Ortlund defined the Biblical word for worship as "to bow, to do reverence to, to kiss the hand of, or other expressions to indi-

cate and acknowledgement of the presence of Somebody Great." If gathering Biblical information, fellowship, and appreciating perfected music is not worship, then what is worship?

Psalm 100 answers that question. In this psalm, the author gives seven imperative verbs to denote the character of worship. Before we approach the specifics about these verbs, we need to understand that worship is not a geographic place, but rather an activity. When one goes to worship, he engages the person of the Almighty God. The following is a list of how that is done.

Make a joyful noise (100:1). Many music ministers quote this



Hester

verse as a choir enlistment technique so as not to discourage those of us who cannot carry a tune in a wheelbarrow. Their attempts to involve us in worship approach the psalmist's meaning.

The Hebrew word, however, signifies a glad shout; such as loyal subjects give when their king appears. C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "Never will the world be in its proper condition till with one unanimous shout it adores the only God." The stiff congregations do not always welcome such expressions. An appropriately placed "Amen" from the congregation should never be discouraged as long as it is "unto the Lord," and not for show.

Serve the Lord (100:2a). Many attend church. Few, however, hold a job to sustain her. The unemployment rate for teachers, choir members, chaperones, and other various church-jobs is staggering. Yet,

the unemployment rate for feeding the poor, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, taking in strangers, and visiting the sick and imprisoned is even worse. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Notice that the service must be with a glad heart and not out of dreaded obligation.

Come into his presence (100:2b). People who desire worship must focus their attention on God, and not on people or circumstances. Spurgeon wrote, "We ought in worship to realize the presence of God, and by an effort of the mind to approach Him." One of the best tools to help us do this is by singing. May every believer agree with Dr. Watts, "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God."

Know that the Lord is God (100:3). This knowing consists of three realizations. First, we need to know that God is our

creator and we are not self-made in any circumstance. Second, we need to know that God is our owner and we belong to him solely and completely. Third, we need to know that God is our sustainer and that he provides for us green pastures for us to grow.

Enter into his gates (100:4a). The focus of this verb is relational. The Lord desires that we consciously draw near to him. The fact that the holy God invites us to draw near to him evokes thanksgiving and praise for those who believe.

Give thanks (100:4b). Thanksgiving is the appreciation for blessings received from the hand of God. For example, I thank God for my family and my job.

Bless his name (100:4c-5). Praise is the expression of awe about God's character. For example, I praise the Lord for his righteousness and love.

Hester is pastor of Mantee Church, Mantee.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Productive in discipleship

John 15:1-17

By Beth W. Cape

Discipline — what an awful word! It brings back memories of childhood. One most loved teacher was my third grade teacher, Ms. Verlee Rainey. She taught our class everything from "Head, shoulders, knees and toes," to her life's motto, "To everything there is a season." In her classroom we knew that we would have a great time playing games, but when it was time to study, the playing was over.

Ms. Verlee had a friend she called "Sally." Sally was a pretty face drawn on the handle of a wooden hairbrush. A visit from Sally meant that you held out

your hand and got a swat on the palm. It only took once for me to know that I didn't want to do anything that would cause me to get a visit from Sally. Ms. Verlee believed in discipline.

In the fifteenth chapter of John, Jesus uses the parable of the grape vine to show the need for discipline. The expert vinesman knows just how important it is that a vine be pruned again and again, year after year, in order to produce the best possible fruit.

A parent knows how important it is to discipline a child over and over, year after year, time after time. The parent doesn't let a child eat candy all the time



Cape

even though it tastes so good. He teaches the child an appetite for more healthy foods. A parent's job is to "train up a child in the way he should go;" not just to let the child do what the child thinks best.

We understand the need for a child to be disciplined and for a vine to be pruned but when it comes to the thought of God disciplining us, we say, "Oh Lord, don't let anything bad happen to me!" Hebrews 12:10-11 says "God disciplines his children for their own good so that they may share in his holiness. No discipline is pleasant at the time but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

Why does God discipline us? To share in his holiness! To produce more fruit of his spirit

— peace, joy, love, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

How does God discipline us? He uses everyday events in our lives. Take for example the virtue of patience. I have always been a very impatient person. Waiting is one of the hardest things for me to do. While waiting many years for that perfect husband I prayed for patience. Then when he finally came along, I prayed for children. God answered my prayers by sending three children in four years. What a crash course in patience three young children can give!

Max Lucado says it this way in his book *A Gentle Thunder*: "You've seen gardeners realign a plant, and you've probably seen God realign a life. The family uprooted and transferred to another city — was it so they could learn to trust God? The person so healthy, suddenly sick

— was it to remind him to rely on the Gardener? The income stream dried up — was it God's way of lifting you out of the soil of self and drawing you closer to himself? Leaders with questionable motives and morals are elected. Is it God's way of stirring people to revival?"

The parable of the vine shows us more than just the need for discipline. It reminds us that we can do nothing without our Lord.

In the fifteenth chapter of John, the word "abide" occurs ten times in the first ten verses. Only through abiding in him can we grow through his discipline and produce fruit. We must accept the discipline of the Lord in order to become a better disciple. Disciple — discipline — think about it.

Cape is director of children and family ministry at First Church, Picayune.

LIFE AND WORK

Why should we trust each other?

Ex. 18:17-23; Ps. 15:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:11

By Doug Bain

Recent events in Yugoslavia and Colorado bring into focus the challenge of living in community. A proactive approach focuses the challenge on those who feel marginalized and alienated, who are outside or on the fringe, who are without significance, power or input into their daily context. The challenge also focuses on those who do not have the skills necessary for effectively handling disappointment, hostility, and fear.

Learning to interact together as community is exceedingly complex, but there are untapped resources. Surely a forum of strategists — politicians maybe,



Bain

social scientists, theologians, ethicists — could pool resources for productive action.

What insight could Scripture offer to the forum? Biblical insights on community building are valid, even if a step short of strategies. The following passages offer perspective on building an atmosphere and a basis for trusting relationships, producing a common knowledge that all in community have at heart each other's best interests, that we are pulling for and not against each other. That could be "post modernism" in a new key!

Being trustworthy (Ps. 15:1-5). This passage lays out basics for honoring God, honoring him

by treating the neighbor with dignity and integrity so that trust becomes possible. The text interprets us so that we understand ourselves better. God has so constructed the cosmos that corporate life "hangs together" only when we act rightly, speak truthfully, build trusting relationships with neighbors, keep our word, and do not take advantage of those in need. Personal integrity and trustworthiness are the foundations on which strong, trusting community is built. Surely strategies can be found which implement such an incredible vision.

Being interdependent (Ex. 18:17-23). "Community" involves interchange, exchange — of ideas services, interests, ideologies, visions, disappointments, insights — instead of hostilities. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, advised him, "You cannot carry the entire load by yourself. You need help in judging these peo-

ple." Every effective leader needs a functioning advisory council. By sharing the load, Moses would survive and the people would be satisfied. What a tragedy when people, especially leaders, assume they will appear weak if they depend on others to help them. Mutual dependency, with everyone contributing, is necessary to build trusting community, built on a trust that each one does indeed care.

Being willing to offer second chances (2 Tim. 4:11). Of all institutions, churches could offer the world a guide for community building! It is difficult to work with people who foul up on assignments, committees, projects, reports, responsibilities, and leadership. So — they foul it up. God does not write us off when we fail — maybe we can follow suit and offer at least a second opportunity to others. Such an approach is called "grace and mercy." We ask for it — we can offer it. Paul could have high expectations and even

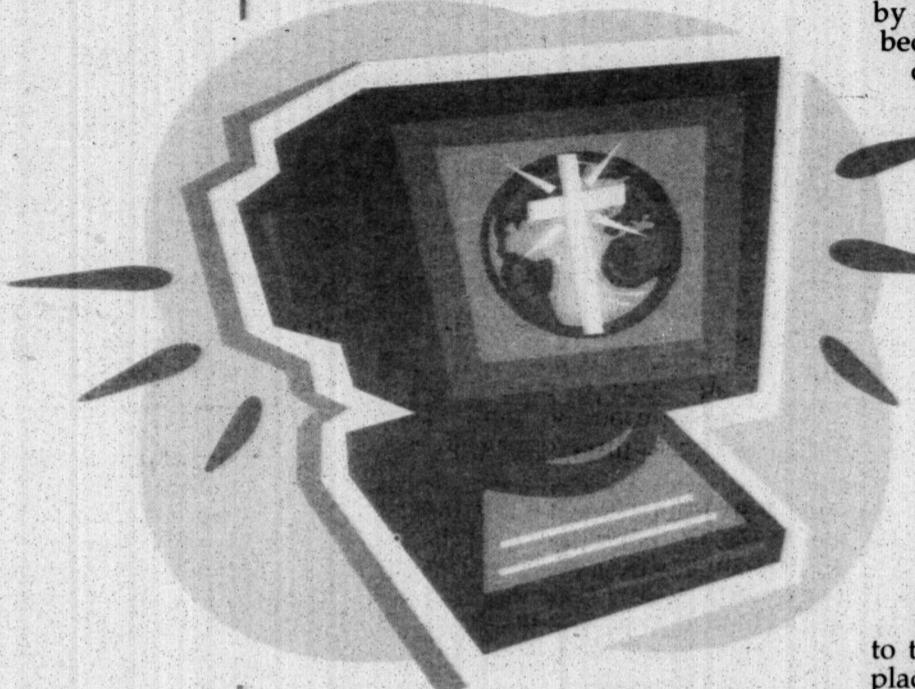
be rigid at times. Mark possibly had been immature in leaving Paul and Barnabas to return home just after beginning the mission to Galatia. Paul saw him as a failure and seems to say "good riddance." Yet Paul was willing to change his mind. The story comes full circle and Paul says, "Sure, Timothy. Bring that boy with you. He is helpful after all!" People disappoint us and do not measure up to our expectations, but giving second chances and trusting them can build rather fragment community. Trusting another person, especially after they have violated our trust, reestablishes a bond, a connection, and rebuilds a relationship that is foundational for community. Building such community is essential for the believer — it puts hands, feet, and heart to our convictions and to our testimonies. "Be ye reconciled one to another!"

Bain is chairman and professor of the Biblical Division at Blue Mountain College.

Religious 'spam' both inspiring, annoying

DALLAS (ABP) — Did you get the electronic-mail message warning about the "It Takes Guts to Say Jesus" computer virus? How about the Easter Cookies recipe? Or maybe the story about the scientist who claims NASA has proof for the Old Testament account of the Earth standing still?

If you're a Christian and have e-mail, you've likely received at least one of these messages or others like them. They're just a sampling of religious-themed "spam" — unsolicited "junk" e-mails forwarded to multiple recipients — flying across the Internet each day.



Add to that the relative who broadcasts an unsolicited e-mail devotional every few days, or the friend with an affinity for weepy stories about children, angels or pets.

Some people thrive on sending and receiving such inspirational messages, but others regard them an intrusion.

"How do you tell someone you don't want this scriptural information coming to your desk?" asked Sam Hull, a computer-systems manager for a Texas ministry and a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. "Then they'll think, 'What kind of pagan are you?'"

Because of his job, Hull receives a lot of unsolicited e-mail. But because he's a serious-minded retired Marine, he has no qualms about asking his well-intentioned correspondents to drop him from their mailing lists.

"I'm not shy about telling people that if they want to go to a Web site and subscribe

to daily devotionals, that's fine," he said. "If I want to get a particular source, I'll subscribe myself."

In other words, leave me alone and stop cluttering up my inbox.

Roberta Echols, an elementary school teacher in Chattanooga, Tenn., shares Hull's weariness over unsolicited e-mail. "We get tons of religious, weepy, devotional type e-mails," she said. "Often, I don't have the brain left at the end of the day, when we check our e-mails, to process the tenderness of the article," she said.

The Internet's answer to dial-a-prayer annoys some but inspires others.

"Some people do seem to be uplifted by it," Hull acknowledged. "So just because it doesn't do anything for me, does that mean I should keep others from sending it?"

Hull advised those who traffic in religious e-mail to recognize that "one person's inspiration is another person's wince, but when people forward it in e-mail, they can't see you wince," he observed.

Much religious-themed e-mail is harmless, even if the recipient finds it annoying. For example, the week before Easter, Christians all over the nation were sending and receiving a recipe for "Easter Cookies" that prescribed a litany of ingredients and Scripture readings to be mixed together as an object lesson for children.

Every ingredient had some relevance to the passion of Christ, concluding with

Echols said. "They weren't hollow when you broke them open. Thus, no 'empty tomb.' However, the rest of the analogies were OK."

Other religious-themed e-mails aren't so benign, though, said several experts in communications, theology and computers.

"There is absolutely no way for an e-mail message to infect your computer with a virus just by reading it," Hymes explains on his Web site devoted to debunking hoaxes (www.nonprofit.net/hoax/).

The only real danger lies in launching an executable program received via e-mail or from any source, he says. "For heaven's sake, don't run a program from a source you don't have very good reason to trust."

Christians also are susceptible to other kinds of e-mail hoaxes, Hymes and others said. Usually, these involve alarming or heart-touching stories with an air of authenticity but lack any identification of their source or traceable documentation.

"Some of the more interesting hoaxes are related to 'The government is going to end freedom of religion' paranoia," Hymes said. "Like most paranoia hoaxes, they rely on the fact that most people don't check the facts of these messages."

Such e-mail falsely reports that pending legislation requires "all pastors and priests must be licensed by the government" and that "standards for religious practices must be acceptable to the United Nations." Further, it warns, "Those who say their religion is superior to any other will be punished for hate crimes." None of those provisions is in the real law.

How to spot an e-mail hoax

CUPERTINO, Calif. (ABP) — Charles Hymes, senior human-factors engineer with Hewlett-Packard Co. and an authority on Internet hoaxes, offers these tips for spotting an e-mail hoax on his Web site (www.nonprofit.net/hoax/):

♦ If you get a message that asks you to send it to lots of other people, or perhaps everyone in your address book, don't send it unless you know personally that the message is true. "The more urgent it sounds, the more skeptical you should be."

♦ If you really want to forward a message, check with the originator. "This is the best way to tell a hoax or prank. Just reply to the first sender, and ask them if it is true. If they can't tell you, then don't send it."

♦ Beware of old hoaxes that keep making the rounds. Common examples are the Neiman-Marcus cookie-recipe story, the plea for the child who wants to receive postcards before he dies, the kidney-theft story and various warnings about computer viruses that purportedly will destroy your system if you open a certain e-mail message.

For more information on e-mail hoaxes, visit the "Urban Legends" Web site at www.miningco.com.

Editor urges caution in using info from Internet

JACKSON, Tenn. (ABP) — The almost-limitless supply of inspirational stories available on the Internet could be both a blessing and a curse to preachers, says the editor of a national journal on preaching.

Preachers are always on the lookout for good stories to illustrate their sermons, noted Michael Duduit, editor of Preaching magazine and a vice president at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. And the Internet is full of stories.

Taking stories off Web sites or from e-mails forwarded by friends can be risky, Duduit warned. "One of the big issues to me is that some of the stories without much credibility, that

in the past have just been picked out of church bulletins and been repeated, now have a faster and wider circulation," he said. "The story that's too good to be true can be passed around at the speed of cyberspace, where as in the past it kind of made its way from one church bulletin to another."

"There is a danger for preachers in just picking up a good story and quoting it as fact simply because they got an e-mail," Duduit said.

"It's possible to be embarrassed by passing around information that turns out has no basis in fact."

Duduit advises preachers to avoid using a story in a sermon

unless they know its original source. If a relevant story is forwarded to a preacher via e-mail, the wise preacher will check back with the sender to find out where it came from.

A good dose of common sense is also in order, he said. "I would use my God-given judgment and discernment to say, 'Does this sound reasonable, authentic?' If it [sounds] too good to be true, it probably is."

The rapid and uncharted transmission of stories over the Internet also opens new possibilities for preachers to unwittingly become guilty of plagiarism, Duduit noted.

A case of just such a problem was spotted recently by Bob

Guffey, associate pastor of First Church of Shreveport, La.

"I received an e-mail with a copy of a prayer attributed to the Oklahoma City bombing memorial service," he said. "I happened to recognize it as a prayer from Marian Wright Edelman's 'Guide My Feet.'"

While the prayer may have been used at the memorial service, it was written by Edelman and published in a copyrighted book.

Such a technicality may not cause a preacher to break a law in simply preaching a sermon, Duduit explained. But it could be more significant if the sermon is published or broadcast in any form.

Bibliocipher

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KG BN WIDCSVZ XE OWI
MKTTSN SM OWI MXICF.
WSNIB OIE: MSKT

Clue: Z = K

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Amos Three: Four.